

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A magnetic recording medium having a ~~55 nm or less~~  
~~thickness~~ magnetic layer with a thickness 50nm or less formed ~~on a major~~ over a surface of  
an elongated nonmagnetic support by ~~performing~~ a vacuum thin film forming technique, ~~said~~  
~~magnetic recording medium being slid over a magnetoresistive effect magnetic head or a~~  
~~giant magnetoresistive effect head to reproduce a signal,~~

wherein an angle  $\theta$  which is ~~formed by~~ a growth direction of magnetic particles in a  
~~columnar structure in a~~ longitudinal cross-section of said magnetic layer ~~and~~ with respect to a  
line normal to a ~~longitudinal direction of~~ said nonmagnetic support, satisfies the following  
relation:

$$\theta_i - \theta_f \leq 25^\circ.$$

where  $\theta_i$  is an angle of  ~~$\theta$  in an~~ initial growth ~~portion of~~ for said magnetic layer, and  $\theta_f$  is an  
angle of  ~~$\theta$  in a~~ final growth ~~portion of~~ for said magnetic layer.